

REPORT
OF THE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF
THE TOWN OF LEXINGTON.

FOR THE YEAR 1863-4.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,
5, WATER STREET.
1864.

REPORT
OF THE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF
THE TOWN OF LEXINGTON.

FOR THE YEAR 1863-4.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,
5, WATER STREET.
1864.

REPORT

REPORT

REPORT.

We present, as usual at the beginning of our Report, a brief review of the condition and history of the several schools through the year.

The FRANKLIN SCHOOL has continued, as for several years, in the care of Miss FRANCES M. PARKER. The number of scholars has been small, as it was before,—so small as to lessen the interest of the school. It has, however, improved in regularity of attendance,—one of the surest signs of interest on the part of the pupils; and has, in all respects, met our expectations. We note a gain, extending over several years, in quiet, orderly, and courteous manners in the schoolroom. No class has been prepared this year for the High School.

The WARREN SCHOOL, Miss ISABELLA CUTTER, has maintained its previous good standing, under skilful and faithful instruction. The year before, there had been in this school a great and harmful irregularity in attendance. The evil was commented on at the last annual examination, and urged on the attention of parents and pupils. We are happy to report a very marked improvement in this respect during the year now ended. Through the last term, the attendance averaged about ninety per cent. Three of the first class have been examined for admission to the High School.

The BOWDITCH SCHOOL.—At the last annual examination, the Committee felt called on to comment somewhat pointedly on the inferiority of this school in respect to scholarship. It has made an evident improvement, approaching, if not reaching, an equality with the other schools of similar grade; and deserves credit, therefore, for an unusually good year's work. As to numbers, the school continues to show a tendency to increase. At one time, the number of pupils has exceeded the seats. The discipline of the school has also improved; and, at the close of the year, it made an appearance in all respects pleasant and commendable. This school has prepared four for admission to the High School.

The HOWARD SCHOOL was taught by Miss CLARA WINNING during the spring and fall, and continued to show the traits of quiet good order, and thorough scholarship, for which it has been for years distinguished. At the close of the fall term, Miss Winning resigned her office of teacher, to the regret of the Committee, who cherish for her a high respect as a faithful, persevering, and very successful instructor, always alert to improve herself, as well as aid her pupils. Miss MARY E. BLODGETT of Billerica, a young lady who brought evidence of long and successful practice in her calling, was appointed to fill the vacant place. The school has been well governed and well taught through the winter term; and made, in all respects, as good an appearance at the close of the year as could reasonably be expected so soon after a change of teachers. In the matter of attendance, there has been a loss as compared with previous terms. This, we trust, will soon be changed to a gain. We regret that the teacher who has made so good a beginning in this school is not to remain.

HANCOCK SUB-PRIMARY.—This school has been established, since the beginning of the year, to meet the

exigency presented in the last Annual Report; viz., an unmanageable excess of pupils in the Primary School. The room which was left unfinished in the Hancock School-house was finished, and furnished in accordance with votes of the town, so as to receive a school of thirty-six pupils. The expense of preparing the room for the actual sessions of the school was two hundred and seventy-one dollars. The arrangements were made with especial reference to the wants of the little people who were to occupy it; who were to be learners in the elements of good manners, of neat, regular habits, and all the proprieties of the school-room, at least as much as in letters. Miss SUSAN E. SIMONDS, who was appointed to the charge of this school, seemed to the Committee to be peculiarly gifted with the qualities most desirable in one who is to have the care of very little children. Her success justifies the opinion; and the company of beginners in the long path of mental and moral training have been wisely and firmly governed by the gentlest means, and in the spirit of sympathy for them which most surely wins at once love and respect.

HANCOCK PRIMARY.—Thus brought down from its embarrassing wealth of eighty pupils to the more suitable size of fifty, this school has most rapidly improved in order and learning. In the former respect, it is capable of still farther improvement, and will, we hope, realize it: but, as it is, it is entitled to the name and praise of being a lively, cheerful, and successful school; and its teacher, Miss ELIZABETH D. PARKER, deserves the approval and gratitude of parents and Committee. In this school, ten pupils were neither absent nor tardy during the last term.

HANCOCK GRAMMAR.—At the close of the preceding year, the teacher, who had most ably conducted this school for four years, left. Urged by some considerations besides their high estimate of her ability, the Committee appointed

Miss ABBY C. STETSON, not without feeling some doubt whether one so little tried in the duties and difficulties of the schoolroom would succeed in making good, even moderately, the place of so capable a teacher as Miss HOYT. We are glad to say, that we think Miss STETSON has succeeded well. It was to be expected that the effects of the change would be felt and seen in some respects disadvantageously; but Miss STETSON has so earnestly and courageously met the difficulties of her position this first year, as to warrant the highest expectations of her future success. At the fall examination, the school appeared well: at the end of the year, it appeared *very* well. The first class, of twelve, have been examined for admission to the High School, and were found in a good state of preparation. One, detained from the examination by illness, will make the whole number going from this to the High School, this year, thirteen.

ADAMS PRIMARY. — This school suffered interruption twice by the illness of the teacher in the winter term. Though its sessions were continued during the longer interruption by a substitute, there could hardly help being a loss in the amount of progress. At the closing examination, the order was exceedingly good; and all the exercises showed thoroughness in what had been accomplished.

ADAMS GRAMMAR. — Under Mr. MARSTON, this school continued in the good ways established the year before, with every prospect of a happy and successful year's study. This was suddenly destroyed by Mr. MARSTON's acceptance of an appointment to a school in West Cambridge, when the fall term had just begun. The Committee received only one day's notice of Mr. MARSTON's intention to leave. As soon as possible, they procured another teacher, — one who brought perfectly satisfactory testimonials of his qualifications and success for years as a teacher. Unfortunately,

Mr. CUMMINGS did not obtain either the good-will of his pupils, or a general approval and sympathy from the people. Consequently, though evidently well qualified to teach under more favorable circumstances, the relation was unsatisfactory on both sides; and, at his own request, he was released at the end of the term.

Mr. WILLIAM P. BENNETT was appointed for the winter term. Under his care, the school rapidly regained the ground it had lost. The admirable influence which Mr. BENNETT exerted, and the universal affection inspired in his pupils by his kind, firm, and conscientious treatment, render it a cause of exceeding regret that he is not to remain; while the best wishes of all follow him to a new and more remunerative field of labor.

THE HIGH SCHOOL. — As we have said before, there is no need to praise this school. The people have so fully shown their interest and approval by attendance at its examinations, as well as in other and more substantial ways, that we may consider it already as much admired as we could wish. The school has not been resting on its laurels; but, in various ways, the accomplished principal has labored to add to its apparatus and methods of exciting the praiseworthy ambition of its pupils, and an eager love of learning. At the end of the spring term, when no formal examination has been customary, a set of written questions was prepared by the Committee, and given to the school in such a way as to subject all to an equal and searching test of their thoroughness in the studies of the term. The answers were also in writing; and the papers containing them were carefully and with much labor reviewed by the Committee, and marked according to the correctness, fulness, and neatness of the work; and these marks were made a part of the basis for determining the rank of the pupils. These papers were highly creditable, as a whole, to the scholarship of

the pupils. During the last term, two papers or literary journals have been edited by selected pupils, and filled with original compositions by present and past members of the school.

At the end of the year, in addition to the day usually given to examination, a half-day was assigned for closing-exercises by the graduating class. These exercises were listened to, by a large audience, with profound interest. Twelve pupils received diplomas, certifying to their fulfillment of the course prescribed for the school.

Miss MARION A. FISK, a member of this class, died early in the last term: the first instance of the kind, so far as now remembered, during the existence of the school.

We call attention to what we believe to be the unprecedented rate of average attendance during the year, — very near ninety-nine per cent in the spring term, ninety-nine and three-fifths per cent in the fall term, and ninety-six and two-thirds per cent in the winter. The record is equally pleasant as an evidence of the zeal and perseverance and of the general good health of the pupils.

GENERAL REVIEW.

The Committee think there is a growing sentiment of unity among the schools; causing them to think of themselves as parts of a whole, rather than as wholly independent schools; producing a mutual interest that is at once friendly and emulous, and giving them a central object of anticipation and effort in the completion of the course at the High School. This feeling, under wholesome direction, we consider very advantageous. The plan of studies is intended to foster it; each school being made to think of itself as incomplete by itself, and looking to the next grade as the natural and proper aim of its special hopes and

efforts. It is desirable, and intended, that the Grammar Schools shall afford a complete course in those elementary branches which are most essential for the ordinary, practical wants of life; so that those who are unable to pursue their studies farther shall not fail of that privilege of education which it is the first object of our schools to secure to all. At the same time, we wish to cultivate the ambition which presses forward to a longer and wider course of study, with the generous and wise sentiment which covets knowledge for its own sake, — the same sentiment which makes it the almost universal desire of parents in this land to give their children a good education. We have endeavored to arrange such a course for the High School as will give some room for choice, according to the tastes and future plans of the pupils; and, at the same time, lay the foundation, in a carefully learned elementary knowledge, for the continued progress of the pupils after leaving school, if their inclinations and opportunities allow them to go on with their studies. It is better to have a little well learned, than much so imperfectly mastered as to be easily and soon forgotten.

SCHOOL-BOOKS.

We have made few changes in school-books; and, such as have been made, we have tried to effect in such a way as to cause very little, if any, increased expense to the pupils. We know that changes are not always improvements; but it is as certain that a new interest is sometimes awakened by a change of text-books, which more than compensates for the small cost. It is not in buying new books for children that the danger of profusion is to be found; and the apparatus of juvenile instruction is not the spot where economy should begin.

DISCIPLINE.

We have not had many occasions to think particularly of this branch of school-training during the past year. In regard to two-thirds of the schools, no complaint either of severity or laxity has reached the Committee; and from the rest, only so much (with one exception) as serves well to refresh our minds as to the never-ending difficulty of doing the right thing always in this respect. This part of the work taxes the teacher's powers more severely than all the rest; and, for perfect success, requires a combination of natural and acquired faculties seldom found. It is not *success*, in this respect, simply to secure good order in the schoolroom: but to do this by the use of the best means; by moral strength producing in the pupils the right feeling in regard to it; to infuse a temper of cheerful and intelligent submission to the principles of order and propriety, not only as far as to the door of the schoolroom, but to the outermost limits of the school,—this is one of the rarest as well as one of the most precious triumphs of the teacher's patience, wisdom, and skill. We desire to reduce the amount of corporal punishment of all kinds to the narrowest possible limits. We uphold a teacher in resorting to this, when all better means fail; but the very need is sign of failure, in some measure, to govern well. No teacher should be satisfied to remain in that stage which necessitates the use of physical pain to keep children in order; but, so long as this is the case, should feel that there is something yet to be gained. Better by far is the wise caution which prevents the kindling of the conflagration, than the water which extinguishes it after it is raging. On the other hand, parents are bound to do their utmost to aid the teacher in this great work, by most seriously enjoining on their children a perfect and cheerful compli-

ance with all the laws of the school. A very little neglect on the part of parents, a very little natural but unwise prejudice for their children, and against the teacher, is enough to redouble the difficulty of the teacher's work, and often to render it wholly unsuccessful. We do not want merely to restrain the young from misconduct; but, by all wise and good influences, to train them to the love and practice of every pure and honorable habit. In this work, the most prudent, forbearing, and kind co-operation of teachers, parents, and Committee, will prove no more than the end in view requires, and is worth. That the young can be won by kindness, and controlled by gentle firmness, we have abundant evidence.

TRUANCY.

At the annual town-meeting, the attention of the citizens was called to the provisions of the State law requiring towns to make suitable rules and regulations for the prevention of truancy and related offences; and a set of by-laws was adopted, providing for the arrest and punishment of obstinate and habitual offenders in this respect. Hitherto there have been very few instances of a persistent habit of lawless absence from school; and we trust there may never be any necessity of bringing the terrors of the law to aid in preventing the violation of the proper rules of our schools as to unwarranted absence. Undoubtedly the chief reliance must be placed in the care and diligence of parents and teachers checking the first symptoms of a habit so surely fatal to the welfare of the young.

THE COURSE OF STUDIES.

No essential changes have been made in the course as published in the last Annual Report. In the Primary

School, for the geography previously used, we have introduced a simpler book, better adapted to young beginners, as well as considerably cheaper. In some of the schools, Eaton's Primary Arithmetic has been introduced in the place of Greenleaf's. We shall continue to make such changes as will be, in our judgment, a benefit to the school.

APPROPRIATIONS.

The rise of price in fuel, as well as other articles of less importance, during the year, exhausted the appropriation, with the additions usually made from the State, and the balance of the preceding year; and yet, at the close of the year, there was less fuel on hand than has been usual. These and other considerations, obvious and familiar to all, rendered a larger appropriation needful for the ensuing year. In accordance with the recommendation of the Committee, and with what we believe to be a wise liberality, the town voted the sum of forty-two hundred dollars. It is about ten dollars for each pupil in our schools, assuming that the number shall remain the next year as it has been the last. This is not an extravagant sum to pay for the education of children. The Committee pledge themselves, as far as those now reporting shall be in charge, to use their best exertions to secure a fruitful expenditure of it; and to maintain the schools, as far as possible, in what they believe to be at present their orderly and effective condition.

L. J. LIVERMORE, }
CHARLES TIDD, } *Committee.*
JONAS GAMMELL, }

REPORT OF BOOK-AGENCY.

Book-Agency to Town of Lexington, Dr.

| | |
|--|--------------|
| To cash, balance on hand April 1, 1863 | \$20.63 |
| „ amount of books | 43.80 |
| | ———— \$64.43 |

Cr.

| | |
|---|--------------|
| By books furnished indigent children for 1863-4 | \$11.31 |
| „ „ „ teachers' desks | 6.39 |
| „ „ on hand | 45.20 |
| „ cash „ „ | 1.53 |
| | ———— \$64.43 |

Respectfully submitted by

H. HOLMES, *Agent.*

MARCH 31, 1864.

TABULAR VIEW.

| SCHOOLS. | TEACHERS. | No. of Weeks in Summer. | No. of Weeks in Winter. | No. of Weeks in Year. | No. of Scholars in Summer. | Average in Summer. | No. of Scholars in Winter. | Average in Winter. | Wages per Month. | Amount for the Year. |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| HIGH SCHOOL | { Augustus E. Scott . Lusanna P. Damon . } | 26 | 14 | 40 | 52 | 50+ | 47 | 45+ | \$80.00 | { \$800.00 75.00 } |
| HANCOCK GRAMMAR . . | Abby C. Stetson . . | 26 | 14 | 40 | 46 | 39 | 54 | 48+ | 24.00 | 240.00 |
| HANCOCK PRIMARY . . | E. S. Parker | 25.8 | 14.2 | 40 | 49 | 41+ | 46 | 42+ | 22.00 | 220.00 |
| HANCOCK SUB-PRIMARY . | S. E. Simonds . . . | 23.2 | 13.8 | 37 | 38 | 33 | 35 | 27 | 14.00 | 125.50 |
| ADAMS GRAMMAR . . . | { John D. Marston . W. H. Cummings . } | 25 | 14 | 39 | 51 | 44- | 56 | 49+ | 60.00 | 585.00 |
| ADAMS PRIMARY . . . | { William P. Bennett . Mary B. Howe . . . } | 25 | 14 | 39 | 53 | 39+ | 50 | 40 | 22.00 | 214.50 |
| HOWARD | { Clara Winning . . . Mary E. Blodgett . } | 25.4 | 14.6 | 40 | 34 | 23+ | 34 | 28 | { 22.00 20.00 } | 212.70 |
| BOWDITCH | Anna M. Knight . . | 25.4 | 14.6 | 40 | 43 | 35- | 44 | 38+ | 22.00 | 220.00 |
| WARREN | Isabella Cutler . . . | 25.6 | 14.4 | 40 | 33 | 26+ | 35 | 29+ | 22.00 | 220.00 |
| FRANKLIN | Frances M. Parker . | 24.6 | 14.4 | 39 | 24 | 19- | 23 | 21 | 22.00 | 214.50 |

The attendance at the High School has been $98\frac{9.5}{100}$ per cent for the first term, $99\frac{6}{10}$ per cent for the second term, and $96\frac{6.6}{100}$ per cent for the third term.